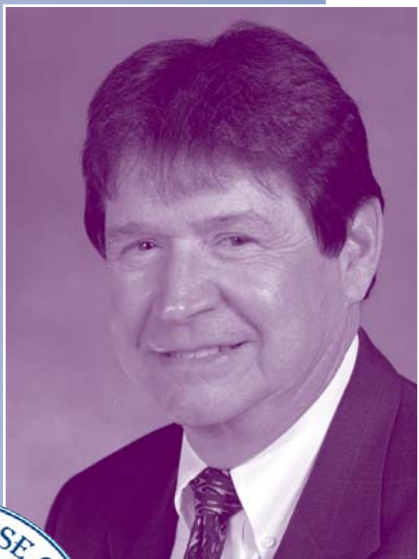
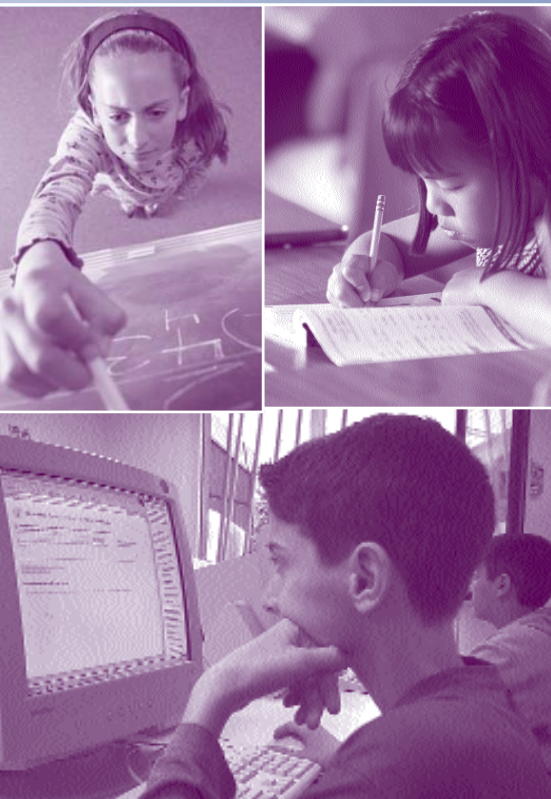


State Representative **Clyde Kersey**



Session Report



- ☒ The New State Budget
- ☒ Economic Development Initiatives
- ☒ New Voter ID Legislation
- ☒ Fighting Meth Production

INDIANA'S NEW BUDGET



School Funding Cuts and Increased Property Taxes

The new state budget that passed by a narrow margin increases property taxes and, at the same time, cuts funding for local schools. After years of bipartisan efforts to reform education and reduce property taxes, the majority party has approved a budget that will cut state funding for many schools and raise property taxes by nearly \$850 million.

I voted "NO" on the final version of the state budget because of the negative impact it will have on education, children and those who pay property taxes. I believe there will be many victims of the new state budget.

There are no minimum guarantees in state funding for schools, which means more than 140 school corporations will receive less money. Those corporations will be forced into eliminating teachers, cutting programs and increasing class sizes. Any additional funding for schools will come primarily from raising local property taxes.

There will be reduced state support through the Property Tax Replacement Credit (PTRC), another move that will increase local property taxes. This eliminates the promise

"I believe there will be many victims of the new state budget."

of just three years ago to provide more state support to combat rising property taxes in light of the historic and controversial statewide reassessment.

In addition, funding for the program that provides health care for the elderly, disabled and children will increase by 5 percent, although bipartisan experts have predicted a 10-percent growth. State assistance for road repairs and improvements will decrease as well.

It is a shame that the legacy of this session will be a budget that turns its back on Indiana's schoolchildren and property taxpayers. For anyone who cares about education and local taxpayers, it is simply indefensible.

Economic Development

I believe it is the duty of the General Assembly to provide the opportunities for Indiana to **create, maintain and increase good-paying jobs** in growth areas of our economy. This year's legislature made economic development a priority.



Rep. Clyde Kersey

In fact, the very first bill passed into law this session created a new public-private group—the Indiana Economic Development Corporation—to serve as the leader for development efforts across our state. I was especially pleased we were able to make changes to this corporation that will ensure it is accountable to the public.

Other measures designed to help spur economic growth include **increasing the research and development tax credit**, phasing out the sales tax on research and development equipment, and extending the life and use of EDGE tax credits that help businesses retain and create jobs.

We also passed a measure that will speed the process of obtaining permits so developers can begin construction on new industrial sites. **Small business owners will receive additional tax breaks** under new legislation that will also reduce the potential that they will be harmed by government regulation.

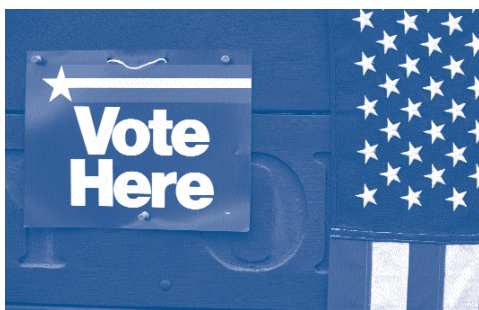
All of these reforms can help economic growth in Indiana. We must remain attuned to the opportunities in a changing environment, and I will continue to search for ways to grow our economy and increase good-paying jobs.

Voter ID Proposal a Flawed Reform Approach

You might have heard that the General Assembly passed a partisan plan to require individuals to **show photo identification in order to vote on Election Day.**

Upon first glance, this sounds like a good idea. Present your driver's license and you can vote. Who couldn't meet that requirement?

People who live at nursing homes and no longer drive, for one. Women who have married and changed their names, because their driver's licenses will not match their voter registration files. Minorities who have had to face many barriers in the past to their efforts to vote.



The idea has been sold as a way to eliminate fraud and restore honesty to the electoral process. **What advocates for the bill have failed to tell you is that this bill will surely deny some Hoosiers the right to vote.**

Consider the cases of electoral fraud that have occurred in recent years in Indiana. They all have involved absentee ballots, and this legislation fails to address that issue. As the majority party advanced this proposal, it did not provide a single instance where electoral fraud in Indiana has occurred at a polling site.

This legislation has several major flaws, and a court challenge already has been launched to determine if it violates basic principles of the Indiana Constitution. Several organizations, including the AARP and the League of Women Voters, objected to the legislation in its final form.

The vast majority of voters have photo IDs and should be required to show them. Those who do not have photo ID should not lose the right to vote.

Representative Kersey reviews legislation while seated at his desk in the House Chamber.



Inspector General

Fraud and corruption in state government will be investigated by an inspector general created through a new state law approved in 2005. Thanks to changes championed by House Democrats, this inspector will work with locally-elected prosecutors and judges to look into charges of wrongdoing and determine whether to proceed with criminal charges.

Protecting Firefighters

Volunteer firefighters and emergency medical technicians will not be penalized by their employers for being absent when they are responding to emergency calls.

Tracking Sex Offenders

A person convicted of possessing child pornography who has a prior conviction for that offense will be required to register as a sex offender.



The state will be allowed to seek life in prison without parole for a person who has multiple felony offenses involving sex crimes against a child.

Protecting Victims

Victims will be automatically notified when offenders are released from prison or have their status changed. Offenders on home detention will be ordered to wear monitoring devices that constantly track their location.

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New Law Addresses Production of Meth

It has become a recurring theme each legislative session: the Indiana General Assembly passes new laws designed to stop the production and use of the drug meth. The 2005 session was no different, as we restricted the sale of cold and allergy medicines and other products that contain ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, two ingredients used to make meth.

When this law takes effect on July 1, most stores will be required to keep the drugs in a locked case or behind a counter. In addition, customers will be limited to 3 grams—about 100 tablets—of the medicines per week. To make a purchase, they will have to show a state or federal ID and sign a logbook.

This legislation is patterned after an Oklahoma law that has helped result in an 80-percent reduction in meth labs found in that state.

Why is meth so dangerous?

Medical experts say the drug, which can be made inexpensively using chemicals that are easy to purchase, produces a high that lasts longer than cocaine and causes delusions and psychotic behavior. Since many of the ingredients are highly dangerous, producing meth raises the risk of explosions and contamination.



In recent years, legislators have passed a series of bills aimed at stopping meth. One of those creations was the statewide Methamphetamine Abuse Task Force, which came up with the concepts contained in this new law. Other measures help police and prosecutors track down people who purchase large amounts of the chemical re-agents used to make the drug and require people convicted of meth-related offenses to help pay for cleaning up sites where they produced the drug.

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